

A spoonful of sweet success, as South West scoops Great Taste stars

Following more than 60 days of judging, the results of the world's most coveted food awards, Great Taste, have just been released, with many producers in the South West now celebrating. Out of a record breaking 12,336 products to be judged, 4,347 were awarded a highly prized Great Taste accolade and a remarkable 501 are based in the South West.

Great Taste 3-star winners from the South West include; a “rich, complex and intense” Chocolate Sorbetto from **Swoon**, which is produced by churning the finest 85% Extra Bitter Chocolate with water and natural sugars; **Jess's Ladies Organic's** Luxurious Natural Yoghurt, made using unhomogenised organic milk and live culture, giving it a “lively flavour with citric notes and lovely mouthfeel”; and **Meridian Sea's** “brightly coloured” Classic Seaweed Relish, a mix of fresh wild seaweeds from Brittany and Extra Virgin Olive Oil that has a “lovely ocean freshness with vibrant aromas of the sea”.

While these producers revel in their success and begin displaying the unmistakable gold and black Great Taste logo, with 1-, 2- or 3- stars, on their award-winning products, they will wait with much anticipation to see if they also scoop the top awards for their region. These final honours, including the Great Taste 2017 Supreme Champion, will be announced at the Great Taste Golden Fork Awards Dinner on Monday 4 September, to be held at the Intercontinental Park Lane Hotel, London.

Recognised as a stamp of excellence among consumers and retailers alike, Great Taste, organised by the Guild of Fine Food, values taste above all else, with no regard for branding or packaging. Whether it is gin, biscuits, sausages or coffee being judged, all products are removed from their wrapper, jar, box or bottle before being tasted. The judges then savour, confer and re-taste to decide which products are worthy of a 1-, 2- or 3-star award.

The panel of judges this year included; chef, food writer and author, Gill Meller, MasterChef judge and restaurant critic, Charles Champion, author and Zoe's Ghana Kitchen chef, Zoe Adjonyoh, baker, Tom Herbert, and food writer and baking columnist, Martha Collison, as well as food buyers from Fortnum & Mason, Selfridges, and Harvey Nichols. These esteemed palates have together tasted and re-judged the 3-star winners to finally agree on the 2017 Top 50 Foods, which will be announced in August, the Golden Fork Trophy winners and the Great Taste 2017 Supreme Champion.

Details of this year's winners can be found at www.greatasteawards.co.uk and a wide range of award

winning products are available to buy in delis, farm shops and independent retail outlets, as well as via Taste Shop (tasteshop.co.uk) which helps consumers source Great Taste award-winning products online.

Facts and figures about Great Taste 2017:

- Great Taste is widely acknowledged as the most respected food accreditation scheme for artisan and speciality food producers.
- A record breaking 12,336 different products were entered in 2017.
- Over 500 of the most demanding palates, belonging to food critics, chefs, restaurateurs, cooks, producers and a host of food writers and journalists blind taste each product
- Judging took place across the UK at the following locations:
 - Guild HQ in Gillingham, Dorset, as well several other Dorset venues.
 - The Guild of Fine Food's newly opened second home, No. 42 Southwark Street, London, as well as other London venues.
 - Llandrillo College, Nr Colwyn Bay, as part of this year's Great Taste Roadshow, seeing Great Taste visit North Wales for the very first time.
- **3,171 awarded 1-star**
- **1,011 awarded 2-star**
- **165 awarded 3-star**

As the judges searched for the stars of 2017, waste was kept to a minimum, with unused products being donated to local food banks and hampers made up of excess products for local businesses to raffle in aid of charities. The Guild of Fine Food also donates surplus computer equipment, used to record the judges' comments, to community-based projects across the UK, which are then refurbished and used to facilitate after school clubs and many other initiatives designed to support underprivileged families.

[A full list of all regional winners is available from amy@freshlygroundpr.co.uk.](mailto:amy@freshlygroundpr.co.uk)

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Images are available to view in the [press room](#) on the Guild of Fine Food website and high resolution images are available from amy@freshlygroundpr.co.uk.

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www.gff.co.uk

www.greatasteawards.co.uk

What are Great Taste judges looking for?

They're looking for great texture and appearance. They judge the quality of ingredients and how well the maker has put the food or drink together. But above all, they are looking for truly great taste.

How do they work?

Each team of four judges blind-tastes around 25 products per session, discussing each product as a coordinating food writer transcribes their comments directly onto the Great Taste website which producers access after judging is completed. Over the years, numerous food businesses, start-ups and well-established producers have been advised how to modify their foods and have subsequently gone on to achieve Great Taste stars. Food or drink that is deemed worthy of Great Taste stars is also tasted by a team of arbitrators, who taste, confer and agree on the final award given. If judges feel that a product needs some adjustment, and therefore not likely to receive an award, the food or drink gets a second chance on a referral table, where another team blind-tastes and deliberates. For a Great Taste 3-star award, the vast majority in the room – which can be as many as 30-40 experts – must agree that the food or drink delivers that indescribable 'wow' factor.

What should consumers look for?

The logo. The Great Taste symbol is their guarantee a product has been through a rigorous and independent judging process. It's not about smart packaging or clever marketing – it's all about taste.

?? EXQUISITE. WOW! TASTE THAT ?? OUTSTANDING ? SIMPLY DELICIOUS

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